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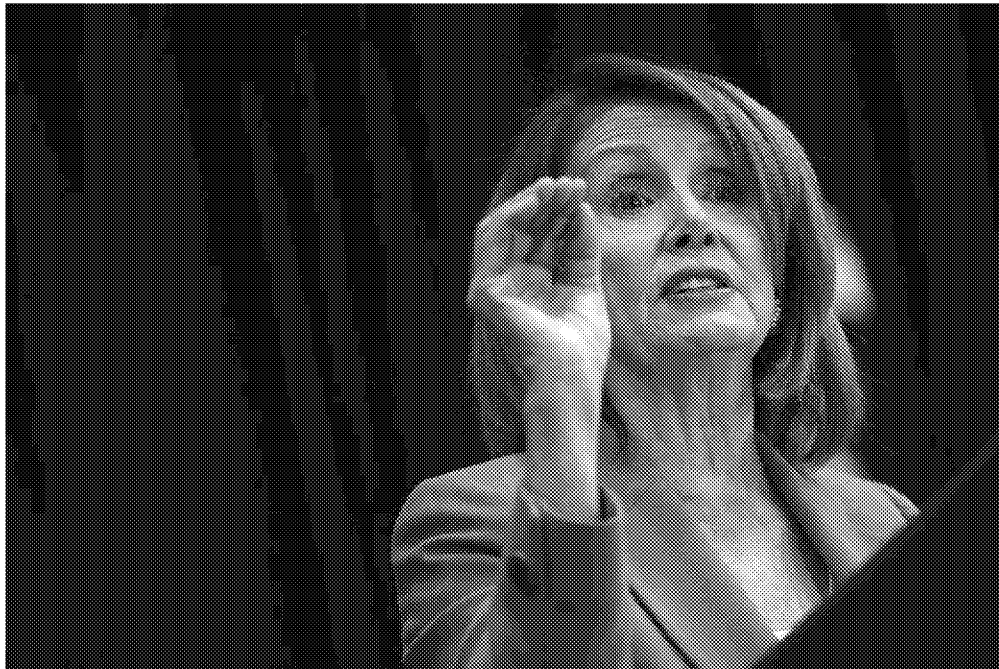
HUNTERS POINT NEWS

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# Pelosi, Farrell lead calls to re-test housing at toxic Hunters Point shipyard

*"It feels the Navy is constantly sweeping something under the rug," said Supervisor Malia Cohen*

By Chris Roberts | @cbloggy | May 14, 2018, 5:52pm PDT



House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA). | Photo by Drew Angerer/Getty Images

Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco) and San Francisco Mayor Mark Farrell led a chorus of demands Monday for the U.S. Navy to test an area of the former shipyard at Hunters Point—now occupied with more than 300 units of market-rate housing, with dozens more units under construction—for radioactive and industrial contamination.

However, representatives from the Navy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, present at a contentious and emotional City Hall hearing in San Francisco, did not immediately or directly address this request.

Instead, these federal officials repeated earlier promises to begin re-sampling other areas of soil at the shipyard—an EPA Superfund site—that were tested by a Navy contractor.

Little else in the way of concrete assurances or new information emerged from Monday's hearing at the Board of Supervisors' Land Use Committee, called by Supervisor Malia Cohen, who represents the Hunters Point neighborhood.

Rather, the hours-long affair served mostly as a forum to air grievances, and an opportunity for elected officials and members of the public to take out their frustrations about the fraud scandal on a series of federal, state, and local regulators—as well as a representative from the disgraced contractor.

## **“[O]ut of an abundance of caution, a rescanning of Parcel A should be swiftly conducted.” – Nancy Pelosi**

The contractor, Tetra Tech EC, was paid \$300 million to remove radioactive and toxic contamination from the 450-acre shipyard, and was later found to have reportedly falsified as much as 97 percent of its work—a revelation owed to testimony from whistleblowers who worked at the site, who came forward to make their allegations in the media after they claim they were ignored by the same federal regulators assigned to oversee the project.

Thus far, two former Tetra Tech EC supervisors have pleaded guilty to fraud charges and have been sentenced to prison—an unprecedented situation, with no comparable incidents in recent US history, regulators present on Monday testified.

Tetra Tech was one of the many firms that worked on Parcel A, a hilltop area of the shipyard long assumed to be safe.

The land was transferred to the city of San Francisco for development in 2004 and housing construction began in 2013, despite allegations from whistleblowers that they discovered radioactive material at the site, and despite Navy records showing that buildings in the area were used as a laboratory and storage by a top-secret nuclear warfare research center the Navy operated at Hunters Point between 1946 and 1969.

Nobody on any level escaped punishment. And a representative from Tetra Tech, Preston Hobson, a senior vice president and the company's chief counsel—sent to give testimony

instead of the company officials requested—was denied the opportunity to give his planned presentation, which reportedly would include justification for the company's continued claims that the cleanup job is sound and the whistleblowers' allegations have no merit.



Housing at the Hunters Point Shipyard. | Photo by Chris Roberts

He exited the Board of Supervisors chamber shortly after, dismissing the proceedings as “grandstanding.”

The afternoon fireworks followed a morning that saw more activity from San Francisco's major elected officials than in the preceding four months, when Curbed SF first reported that a Navy review of Tetra Tech's work found that nearly half of it showed signs of fraud or falsification.

In a letter dated Monday sent to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer, Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi called for a “rescanning of Parcel A” to be “swiftly conducted” “out of an abundance of caution.”

“I appreciate the repeated assurance of both of your agencies that it is safe,” Pelosi wrote. “However, given the air of doubt that now surrounds the project, property values can be affected and community members living in Parcel A have expressed their strong desire for retesting. I agree, and believe out of an abundance of caution, a rescanning of Parcel A should be swiftly conducted.”

## **“We request this reevaluation not be performed by Tetra Tech.” – Mark Farrell**

Assurances that Parcel A is safe hinge on Navy record which are admittedly incomplete, and on a 2002 scan of the area conducted by the EPA, a scan that has since been criticized by nuclear physicists as well as community advocates.

In his letter, sent to Enrique Manzanilla, director of the EPA’s Region 9 Superfund Division, and Laura Duchnak, the director of the Navy office overseeing the closure and redevelopment of old military bases, Mayor Mark Farrell called for an “independent reevaluation of the occupied areas of the Shipyard to assure us that they pose no health threat to the people living and working there.”

“We request this reevaluation not be performed by Tetra Tech,” wrote Farrell. “If the Navy and U.S. EPA do not believe that a reevaluation is needed, we are requesting a detailed explanation as to why no further evaluations is [sic] needed in light of the Tetra Tech allegations.”

The mayor’s letter did not elicit an immediate response, according to Deirdre Hussey, Farrell’s spokeswoman.



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Navy officials present during Monday's hearing did not immediately address these requests. The hearing was ongoing as of 5:30 p.m.

Earlier at the hearing, Duchnak said that a retesting plan for Parcel G, one area of the shipyard, would be publicly available within 30 days. She also defended the Navy's oversight of the project.

The Navy first discovered problems with Tetra Tech's data in 2012.

The Navy then allowed the company to investigate itself, a solution that satisfied all regulatory agencies until 2016, when whistleblower allegations led the EPA to pause all land transfers at the shipyard--a chronology for which it did not account to elected officials' satisfaction.

"It feels the Navy is constantly sweeping something under the rug," said Cohen.

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